



## European Guide Dog Mobility Standards – Newsletter 1

Guide Dogs for the Blind Association have pleasure in sending you this first communication on the European funded project, European Guide Dog Mobility Standards (EGDMS).

The EGDMS project is funded through the Leonardo da Vinci programme, part of the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme and is being led by Guide Dogs for the Blind Association in the UK.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The project aims to:

- Transfer and contextualise a training programme for guide and assistance dog instructors based on best practice
- Produce a common standardisation platform for training and make such changes as may be required based on a pilot of activity
- Develop modularised training for Instructors in line with national and European systems for qualification and credit accumulation and transfer and make recommendations for a flexible delivery system
- Develop a CEN Workshop Agreement to cover the training of Instructors
- Enable the adoption of standards consistently across Europe by complying with national and trans-national requirements
- Provide the standards, learning outcomes and appropriate training materials in all partners' languages
- Produce a road map for future implementation across Europe

### **Benefits**

- Increased guide dog ownership in Europe
- A formal European standard of Instructor training
- Increased mobility within Europe for guide dog owners
- Increased mobility of employment for Instructors
- Harmonised qualifications for Instructors
- Fleshed-out training based on International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) Standard 10

*If you would like further information on the project or would like to receive this communication in your preferred format, please contact Jenny Crawford, Project Manager, on [EGDMS@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:EGDMS@guidedogs.org.uk)*

## **Partners**

Guide Dogs for the Blind Association in the UK will work with 5 partner Guide Dog schools across Europe:

- Poland - Fundacja nz Rzecz Osób Niewidomych Labrador Pies Przewodnik
- Slovenia – Slovenian Instructors Association – Centre for Guide Dogs and Assistance Dogs
- Bulgaria – Foundation “Eyes on Four Paws”
- Romania – Light into Europe
- Belgium – Belgisch Centrum voor geleidenhonden vzw

The training and curriculum workstream is being led by the University of Lincoln.

The other partners in the project are:

- EASPD – European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities
- European Committee for Standardisation - CEN Partner – UNI (based in Milan)
- EGDF – European Guide Dog Federation

## **Timescales**

Work is in progress to develop the CEN Workshop Agreement – see below.

The draft CEN Business Plan is available for comment and a meeting is planned for 9 June 2011 in Poznan, Poland, to agree this. All interested parties welcome to attend.

The Final Conference for the project is proposed for September 2012 in Vienna where the report on the project will be presented together with the CEN Workshop Agreement.

## **CEN Workshop Agreement**

What is a CEN Workshop Agreement?

CEN, the European Committee for Standardisation, is the largest and oldest of the three European Standards Organisations and is responsible for the creation of pan-European standards in order to remove barriers to cross-frontier trade and services in the EU.

CEN's role is to demonstrate how the standards developed by the project not only meet the requirements of the sector but also comply with current European directives and policies. This will be achieved through the development of a Workshop Agreement which will ensure portability throughout Europe and offer greater protection to guide dog schools and their clients. Workshop meetings will be open to all interested parties and information on dates will be made available by contacting Guide Dogs as detailed below.

The process for developing the CEN Workshop Agreement is now under way and is being coordinated by the Italian standards agency, UNI, who are based in Milan. The draft Business Plan has been posted on the CEN website (link below) and comments on the draft are invited via the link. The kick-off meeting is planned for Poznan in Poland on Thursday 9 June 2011. All organisations are invited to comment on this document and to attend the kick-off meeting in Poznan – see the link below for further details.

<http://www.cen.eu/cen/Sectors/TechnicalCommitteesWorkshops/Workshops/Pages/WS65-GuideDog.aspx>